

## **MEETING PUTS STATE'S RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS IN SPOTLIGHT**

*By Karl Puckett*

The National Steering Committee of the 25x'25 Alliance, which promotes renewable energy development across the country, will meet next week in Great Falls.

The committee also will tour solar, wind and biomass projects in northcentral Montana.

Cascade County Commissioner Peggy Beltrone, a committee member, is eager to show off the state's renewable energy efforts, particularly those of Montana State University-Northern in Havre, which has a Bio Energy Innovation and Testing Center.

"That's a story that needs to get out and this is a way to get it out," Beltrone said.

Greg Kegel, dean of MSU-Northern's College of Technical Sciences, said he is looking forward to showcasing the college's research development into alternative fuels, lubricants and fuel additives.

"These new products will help ease our dependence on petroleum fuel," he said.

The 25x'25 Alliance promotes generating 25 percent of the nation's energy through renewable resources by the year 2025.

The coordinator of the group is based in Washington, D.C., but members of the National Steering Committee hail from across the nation. Beltrone arranged to bring 17 members of that committee to Montana.

"My point in hosting them (is) I'm very proud of what Montana has done in the renewable energy area," she said.

The committee will meet July 8 at the C. M. Russell Museum in Great Falls and host a roundtable discussion featuring renewable energy experts from Montana.

Gov. Brian Schweitzer, one of the first governors to endorse the 25x'25 Alliance's initiative, is scheduled to be the keynote speaker.

"We are honored to host this important meeting in Great Falls," Schweitzer said in a statement. "This just goes to show that Montana is at the forefront of clean, green energy development."

During the visit, committee members will get ideas from Montana's renewable energy leaders that can be used in reaching the alliance's goal, Beltrone said.

The committee also is planning a July 10 field tour of the BioEnergy Innovation and Testing Center, the Earl Fisher Biofuels facility in Chester and Henke Farms south of Chester, where members will see equipment that recycles carbon put into the soil by farm machinery.